

March 13, 2015

Dear Youth Program Provider,

The Adolescent Health Program is announcing the availability of funds under the Abstinence Education Grant Program (AEGP). The State of Nebraska opts to promote evidence-based programming that implements positive youth development principles, while also having demonstrated impacts on sexual activity. The available funds will support the implementation of Wyman's Teen Outreach Program® (TOP®) in an "abstinence only" environment.

### Overview

TOP® takes a long term, comprehensive, and positive developmental approach. As youth develop their knowledge, skills and confidence through activities and reflection, judgment and choice making skills are strengthened, which also pays dividends in the arena of risk avoidance. TOP®'s documented outcomes include dramatic reductions in teen pregnancy and course failure and school suspension rates.

TOP® facilitators present abstinence as a safe behavior from the standpoint of medical accuracy rather than from a values standpoint. The TOP® approach honors the family's role to disseminate values and as the primary educators of their children. Adolescent brain research and best practice in youth development reinforce that the 'values neutral' facilitation within TOP® is both effective and appropriate for this age group.

TOP® is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program that incorporates a significant amount of Community Service Learning activities into experiential lessons about self-esteem, values, development, relationships, influence, sexuality, communication, goal-setting, and decision-making.

### Program Requirements

Accepting the available funds to replicate TOP® requires facilitators to complete a TOP® Training of Facilitators by a TOP®-trained Trainer. Training will be provided for those responders that indicate interest in either June or July of 2015. Below is a list of TOP® club requirements and expectations:

- The provider must ensure all clubs meet over a 9 month period for a minimum of 25 weekly meetings. Clubs may meet more often than weekly but must still meet over a 9 month period.
- The TOP® Curriculum, Changing Scenes®, or TOP® Community Service Learning (CSL) activities are used for a minimum of 80% of the total weekly meetings.

- Clubs are planning and implementing Community Service Learning opportunities that foster the achievement of a minimum of 20 CSL hours. A minimum of 80% of teens who complete the 9 month TOP® dosage need to complete a minimum of 20 meaningful CSL hours.
- Ensure that TOP® clubs are facilitated by TOP®-trained facilitators. All TOP® facilitators must be trained by trainers who have completed the Wyman TOP® Training of Trainers. Other adults without TOP® facilitator training may assist in support roles but should be given an orientation to the program and should fully understand and support TOP's® values neutral approach.
- The ratio of teens to TOP® trained facilitator must not exceed 25:1. Stronger ratios of 25:2 and 25:3 are acceptable and encouraged.
- TOP® facilitators should consistently strive to maintain levels of physical and emotional safety. Post-surveys measure teens' level of physical and emotional safety. Outcome reports should show that 75% or more of teens report feeling physical safe and 70% or more feel emotionally safe.
- Clubs must complete teen pre- and post- surveys within designated window (4 weeks prior to and 4 weeks following the start and end dates).
- Each active club facilitator must complete an end-of-year facilitator survey
- Schedule an annual on-site club observation visit.
- Club facilitators must collect consent permissions from each teen taking surveys.

Respondents will also be expected to provide detailed information about their approach to partnership with other organizations to implement TOP®. If other entities will have a significant effect on the achievement of any of the above-listed criteria, there must be some level of initiation, training, and agreement with the partnering entity to understand the model and its criteria. The partner must be willing and able to assist the respondent to achieve these criteria. Memorandums of Understanding or similar mechanisms are strongly encouraged.

### Target Group

The AEGP target groups are racial/ethnic minority youth with emphasis on African American, Hispanic and Native American youth who are aged 10 to 14 and/or youth aged 10 to 14 in state custody under Children and Family Services or Office of Probation Administration.

### Funding Levels

The AEGP has a match requirement of 75 percent. TOP® clubs in Nebraska's network have previously functioned on a budget that has ranged from approximately \$18,000 to \$25,000 without a match requirement. For this funding opportunity, the necessary grant award is less because of the cost share requirement. It is anticipated that awards will range between \$15,000 and \$20,000, depending on proposed structure, location, and staffing plans. Interested organizations will receive more in-depth information about this opportunity and should consider the number of clubs that it can provide quality programming with dedicated, consistent staffing for throughout the required nine month period.

## Questions

If you have questions about implementing the abstinence-only version of TOP®, please *email* Michaela Meisner at [michaela.meisner@nebraska.gov](mailto:michaela.meisner@nebraska.gov) before March 25, 2015. Please indicate in writing by March 25, 2015 if you would like a full applicant packet to respond to this opportunity. The approximate schedule expected follows:

Notice issued	March 13, 2015
Letter of Interest to Apply due	March 25, 2015
Full funding description released	March 27, 2015
Work Plan & Budgets due	May 1, 2015
Work Plan & Budget review	May 1-May 15, 2015
Sub grant awards	June 5, 2015
Project period begins	July 1, 2015

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

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